

SPRING 1998

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

# Prevention File



HAVING  
A HOUSE  
PARTY?

  
DON'T ADD  
"GETTING  
ARRESTED"  
TO YOUR  
CHECKLIST!  
SEE REVERSE

- ☐ Town Gown  
Cooperation
- ☐ Using Humor  
in Prevention
- ☐ Campus Police

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# TOWN GOWN COOPERATION

By Thomas L. Gebhardt

 DURING FALL 1989, THE University at Albany and the City of Albany experienced an increase in the number and intensity of complaints concerning the behavior of college students off-campus. Complaints came from concerned neighbors, neighborhood associations, and the local police department as a

result of parties in off-campus apartments involving alcohol as well as traffic to and from area taverns. Problems reported involved alcohol use, yelling and screaming late at night, large and unruly parties, loud music at night and, to a lesser degree, trash and litter.

In response to these complaints and problems, the then mayor of the City of Albany and the president of the University at Albany formed the Task Force on University & Community Relations, composed of university and community members in a united effort to make recommendations for problem reduction.

The task force issued a report in Spring 1990 that was approved by both the mayor and the president. It included both proactive and reactive measures as part of a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to improve the situation in the neighborhoods where our off-campus students traditionally live.

The first task force recommendation called for a permanent committee to both ensure that the original recommendations would be implemented and additional initiatives would be developed. As the then director of off-cam-

What seems to be the “tradition” of increasing town-gown antagonism isn’t necessarily inevitable. The energy of both can, when combined, be effective in developing creative solutions to many common quality-of-life issues.

pus housing, I was asked to chair this new Committee on University & Community Relations.

In Fall 1990 the committee began to meet on a monthly basis with the overall goal of improving relations between college students off-campus and their long-term neighbors. Since that time its goals have been expanded to include improving safety as well as develop alcohol and other drug prevention and education programs off-campus. The committee currently includes student leaders and professional staff from the University at Albany as well as other local colleges—specifically the College of Saint Rose, the Albany College of Pharmacy, and the Albany Medical College—officials from the Albany Police and Fire Departments as well as the Albany Common Council, neighborhood association representatives, community leaders, tavernowners, landowners, and a representative from the Empire State Restaurant and Tavern Association. Membership is open to anybody who wishes to join.

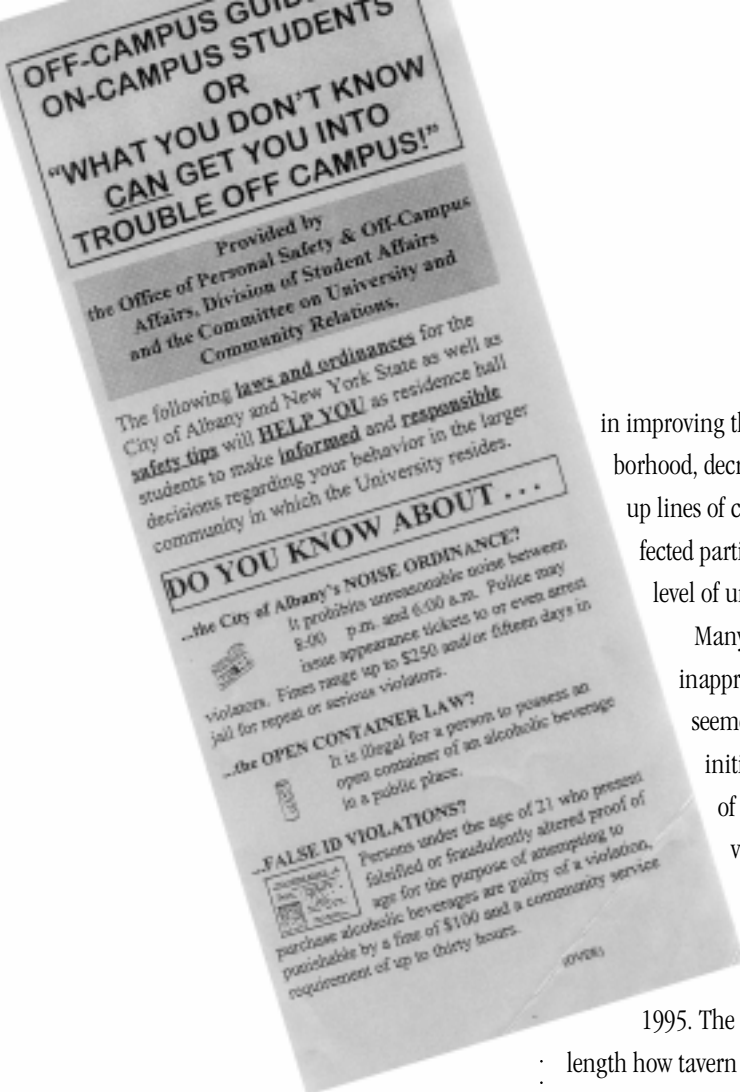
The committee has been an excellent forum for open and honest interactions among all those attending who are not often seated at the same table. Henry Madej, a committee member and president of the Pine Hills Neighborhood Association, said, “The committee demonstrates that what seems to be the ‘tradition’ of increasing town-gown antagonism isn’t necessarily inevitable. The energy of both can, when combined, be effective

in developing creative solutions to many common quality-of-life issues.”

It has undertaken programs, among others, to educate landowners as well as students about expected tenant behavior, to inform college students about their rights and their responsibilities off-campus, to deal effectively and in a timely manner with problems as they are reported, to help enforce local laws and ordinances regarding rental property, and to methodically and cooperatively with the Albany Police Department and neighborhood associations log, identify, and follow up on quality-of-life problems off-campus.

One program informs students living off-campus about the various laws and ordinances that come into play if they decide to host a party in their apartment. Doortags entitled *Having a House Party? Don’t Add Getting Arrested to Your Checklist!* are distributed door-to-door in student neighborhoods a few days before students return to their apartments at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, the committee has developed several initiatives to educate students currently living on campus about local laws and ordinances as well as behavioral expectations off-campus as a proactive measure.

Safety became paramount as a result of several incidents off-campus a few years ago and has proven to be a unifying agent for both students and their long-term neighbors. As a result a number of personal, property,



and fire safety initiatives were adopted by the committee. Safety continues to be a priority for the committee both in terms of reactive and proactive measures that have been enacted.

Albany Police Commander and committee member Robert Wolfgang said: "From the law enforcement standpoint, Albany's Committee on University & Community Relations practiced community policing long before it became the popular thing for law enforcement to do. A group of concerned groups and individuals, each with a stake in the outcome and each able to impact on the problems to some extent, joined forces to identify quality of life and crime issues that needed attention.

"The group, many of whom were not communicating before, pooled their resources and developed and executed plans to address those problems. In doing so, they succeeded

in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood, decreased criminal activity, opened up lines of communication between affected parties, and created an improved level of understanding."

Many of the incidents concerning inappropriate behavior off-campus seemed to involve alcohol. As one initiative regarding the abuse of alcohol off-campus, the voluntary "Tavernowner Advertisement Agreement" program was initiated by the committee during Spring

1995. The committee had discussed in length how tavern advertising might impact the behavior of patrons, especially college students, while frequenting a particular establishment and when they leave the premises.

Tavernowners signing this document agree to review the content of any and all advertising with the intention to promote:

- the responsible and lawful consumption of alcoholic beverages and
- appropriate as well as civil behavior when leaving their establishment. In addition, they agree to comply with current policies and procedures concerning the posting and distribution of advertisements for the City of Albany, the University at Albany, and the College of Saint Rose, copies of which are provided to the tavernowners.

Specifically, participating taverns agree to fashion their advertising to:

- include a statement asking all patrons of their establishment to behave responsibly and in a civil manner in the surrounding neighborhood,
- emphasize the necessity of being 21 years of

age or older and possessing the appropriate valid means of identification to prove such,

- avoid terminology which promotes the irresponsible consumption of alcoholic beverages, and

- promote and advertise non-alcoholic beverages and food specials as much as alcoholic beverage specials.

A copy of a *Cooperating Tavern* sign is provided for display to participating taverns. In addition a sheet of *Cooperating Tavern* logos are also provided to include on their advertisements. This program is part of the cooperative effort with tavernowners located in the traditional student neighborhoods that the committee wants to foster to achieve its goals and also gain a better understanding of their perspective regarding these goals.

Michael Byron, owner of the Washington Tavern, a popular student bar, says: "The Tavernowner Advertisement Agreement is a good first step in promoting the responsible advertising of alcoholic beverages by taverns in the City of Albany."

A team of representatives from the committee and I met with tavernowners who own establishments that college students frequented and/or were members of our committee inviting them to join this program by signing the advertisement agreement. Most tavernowners we contacted agreed to sign on. We are monitoring compliance with the agreement and dealing with any alleged violations by these "Cooperating Taverns." Additional tavernowners are being asked to join this program as they are identified. Currently twelve tavernowners representing



fourteen taverns have signed and abided by this voluntary advertisement agreement.

To date there have been some violations by some taverns, but generally all tavernowners who have signed have made changes in their advertisements to comply with this voluntary agreement. In addition, communication between tavernowners and members of the Committee on University and Community Relations has been greatly increased. This has resulted in other cooperative efforts between all parties involved as other problems related to the consumption of alcohol by college students are identified.

The committee does not have all the answers concerning improving town-gown relations, making life safer off-campus, and dealing with underage drinking and the hazardous use of alcohol by college-age students. But, we do feel that over the past seven years we have devised several proactive and reactive programs that have been effective to date in dealing with these problems in our college communities. □

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*Thomas L. Gebhardt is the chairperson of the Committee on University and Community Relations and director of Personal Safety and Off-Campus Affairs, the University at Albany, State University of New York.*

## TEN KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- 1** We have received continuous support from “above.” Leaders from city government, neighborhood associations, local colleges and student groups have embraced our initiatives. Specifically, support from the mayor of the City of Albany and the president of the University at Albany has been essential.
- 2** Early in the life of our committee we clarified who can do what and who can’t do what regarding the problems identified. This clarified misinformation and assumptions that some individuals had regarding the roles of other parties involved.
- 3** It is very important to be inclusive, not exclusive, in your process. Our committee originally had members appointed, but this quickly was changed to an open membership policy.
- 4** Agree to disagree at times. If you can’t agree on an approach to a particular problem, try one solution, and if it doesn’t work, try the other.
- 5** Keep the dialogue on-going. We have regular meetings at the same time, the same second Wednesday of the month, and the same location. We also established a very strong network of communication outside of these meetings.
- 6** Consistency is very important in dealing with the problems identified. Be consistent and timely regarding your processes—i.e., on following up on house parties, go to the apartment the next day to speak to the students.
- 7** Communicate by every means possible and available. Our committee stays informed by personal contact, telephone, e-mail, faxes, and regular mail.
- 8** Establish an atmosphere of cooperation. Everybody needs to at some time “bend a little” when discussing problems and possible solutions.
- 9** Review and revise. Although this seems obvious, it is not always done consistently. For every tried solution or approach, evaluate it and make appropriate changes for the next time.
- 10** And finally, visibility and exposure are very important. “Do what you say and say what you do!” If nobody knows what you are doing, then essentially nothing is happening.

# Presidential Leadership to Advance Prevention

By William DeJong

 **LAST FALL THE HIGHER Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention released a recommendations report from its Presidents Leadership Group. In this article, William DeJong, PhD, director of the Center, and members of the Presidents Leadership Group, explain the need for presidential leadership in combating student binge drinking.**

The higher education community in the United States can be rightfully proud of its success in educating America's young people, not only preparing them for the world of work, but also for a lifetime of learning. More than that, our colleges and universities are a means for conveying to each new generation the values, ideals, and traditions of human-

kind. Among these traditions, of course, is the drive to develop new knowledge. Indeed, no higher education system in the world does a better job of fostering the creativity of its students.

Presidents of these institutions have been entrusted with a great responsibility.

Students look to them to build a center of learning that will nurture their intellectual and social development. Parents expect college presidents to maintain a campus envi-

ronment in which their children can study, work and, yes, play in safety. Taxpayers and private donors hold them accountable for ensuring that their substantial investment in higher education is well spent. Presidents do not hold this responsibility alone, of course, but that fact does not relieve them of the special burdens of leadership.

This is the context in which college and university presidents must address problems related to student drinking. In our view, student binge drinking and the many problems that arise from it are among the most serious threats faced by our nation's institutions of higher education. Many of the things college presidents worry about—student death and injury, weak academic performance, property damage and vandalism, strained town-gown relations, negative publicity—are linked to student alcohol use.

For a variety of reasons, however, many college and university presidents have not made the fight against student alcohol problems a priority. Some presidents have grown frustrated by the seeming intractability of the problem and have decided to devote their energies elsewhere. Others fear that taking a visible stand will create bad publicity for their school. Some continue to deny that a problem even exists. We also know of the many competing demands on a president's time.

## Members of the Presidents Leadership Group

- Robert L. Carothers, PhD, University of Rhode Island
- Mary Sue Coleman, PhD, University of Iowa
- B. James Dawson, PhD, Tennessee Wesleyan College
- E. Gordon Gee, EdD, Brown University
- Charles A. Hines, PhD, Prairie View A&M University
- Manuel T. Pacheco, PhD, University of Missouri

# Needed on Campuses

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In our view, however, students' high-risk alcohol use is a problem that justifiably demands presidential time and attention. Our primary interest in preparing *Be Vocal, Be Visible, Be Visionary*, the recommendations report of the Presidents Leadership Group, was to underscore the seriousness of this problem and to help embolden college and university presidents to make the fight against student alcohol problems a priority.

Presidents have an obligation to help sustain the economic viability of their institution, but they have an even more important obligation to maintain its academic excellence and to provide a safe environment in which students can learn and grow. The recommendations offered by the Presidents Leadership Group (see sidebar) are not about a return to Prohibition, but the appropriate use of alcohol in a community of learners.

It is important to remember that alcohol use can create problems, not only for the students who drink at high-risk levels, but also for their peers, who suffer a range of consequences from having their sleep or study interrupted to being physically or sexually assaulted. Too often, the majority of students on most campuses, those who drink in moderation and those who abstain, are left to fend for themselves against the inconsiderate, insulting, intimidating, and sometimes criminal behavior of the student binge drinkers

around them. Tolerating this state of affairs because of a hesitance to act is untenable.

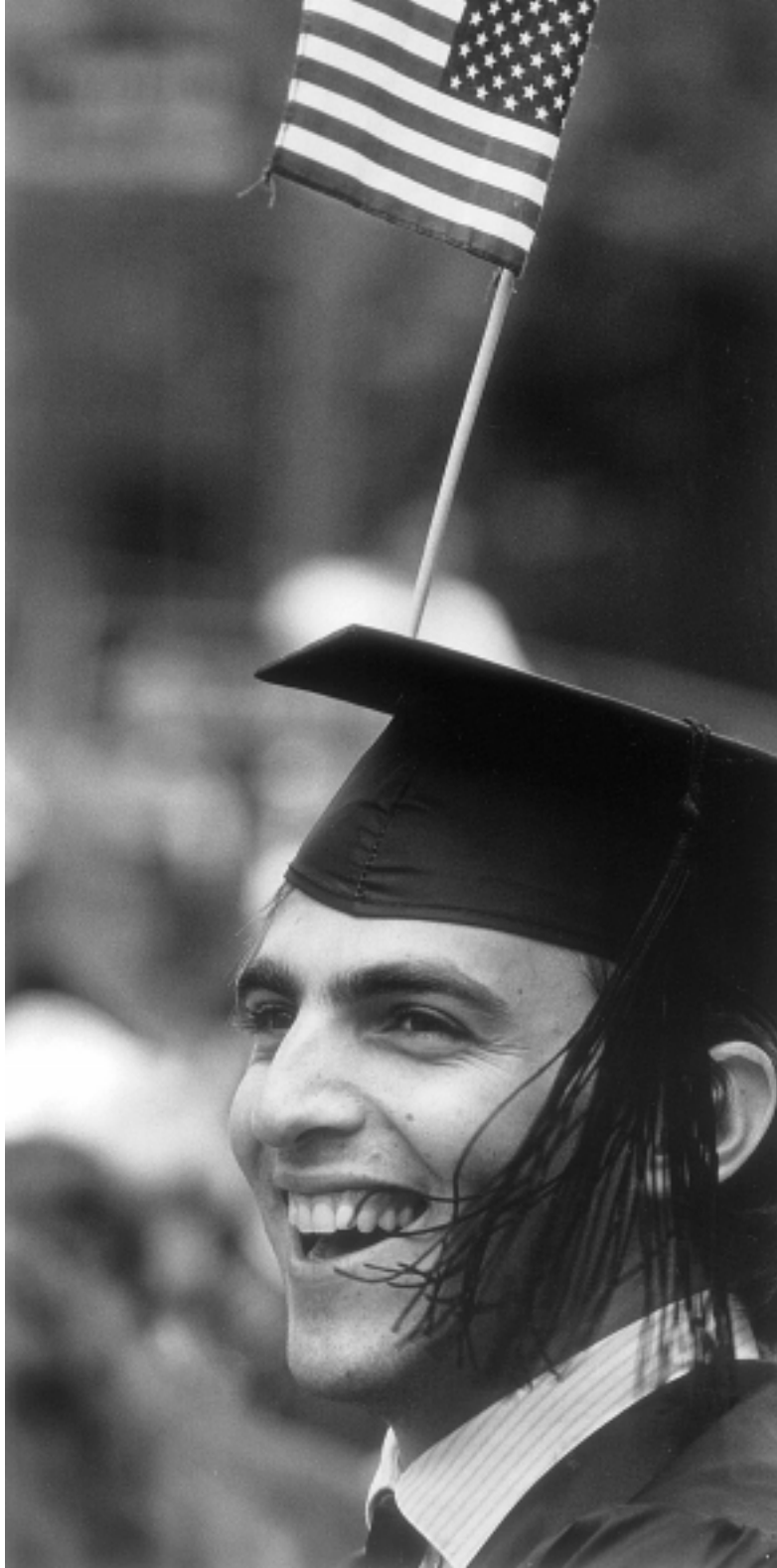
Stemming alcohol problems is not something that presidents can do alone, but their active leadership is essential.

Presidential leadership means putting prevention at the top of the higher education agenda. It means speaking out and writing about the issue at every opportunity. It means reaching out to campus, community, and state-level groups to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for prevention. It means building support for new

programs and policies, especially those with a focus on changing a campus and community environment that promotes high-risk drinking. In short, college and university presidents must be vocal, visible, and visionary.

■ William DeJong, PhD, is director of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, which is based at Education Development Center under con-

tract with the U.S. Department of Education. DeJong is also a lecturer in health communication at the Harvard School of Public Health. The work of the Presidents Leadership Group is supported through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of either the Department or the Foundation. □





# Be Vocal, Be Visible, Be Visionary:

## Recommendations for College and University Presidents on Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention

The Presidents Leadership Group offered their fellow presidents the following recommendations:

**Be Vocal.** College presidents should openly and publicly acknowledge that alcohol and other drug problems exist and then reach out to campus, community, and state-level groups to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for prevention.

**Be Visible.** College presidents should take an active stand on alcohol and other drug issues, convey clear expectations and standards, and serve as a role model to faculty, students, and other senior administrators.

**Be Visionary.** College presidents should make alcohol and other drug prevention a priority in their strategic plan for the school.

The Presidents Leadership Group's set of supportive statements recommend that college presidents should:

- work to ensure that school officials routinely collect data on the extent of the alcohol and other drug problem on campus and make this information available.
- frame discussions about alcohol and other drug prevention in a context that faculty, stu-

dents, alumni, other senior administrators, and trustees care about—excellence in education.

- define alcohol and other drug use not as a problem of the campus alone but of the entire community, which will require community-level action to solve.

- use every opportunity to speak out and write about alcohol and other drug prevention to reinforce it as a priority concern and to push for change.

- work to ensure that all elements of the college community avoid providing mixed messages that might encourage alcohol and other drug use.

- demonstrate their commitment to alcohol and other drug prevention by budgeting sufficient resources to address the problem.

- appoint a campus-wide task force, which includes faculty, students, other senior administrators, and community representatives that report directly to the president.

- appoint faculty, students, and other senior administrators to participate in a campus-community coalition that is mandated to address alcohol and other drug issues in the community as a whole.

- lead a broad exploration of their institution's infrastructure and the basic premises of its educational program to see how they affect alcohol and other drug use.

- offer new initiatives to help students become better integrated into the intellec-

tual life of the school, change student norms away from alcohol and other drug use, and make it easier to identify students in trouble with alcohol and other drug use.

- take the lead in identifying ways to combine alcohol and other drug prevention with economic development in the community.

- as individual citizens, be involved in policy change at the state and local level, working for new laws and regulations that will affect the community as a whole.

- acknowledging that alcohol and drug use is a problem that their schools have in common, participate in state, regional, and national associations to build support for appropriate changes in public policy.

To order a copy of the Presidents Leadership Group's recommendations, contact the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02158 Tel: 800-676-1730, Fax: 617-928-1537, Web site: <http://www.edc.org/hec/> e-mail: [HigherEdCtr@edc.org](mailto:HigherEdCtr@edc.org).

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# Q&A

WITH  
ALAN MARLATT

*G. Alan Marlatt, PhD, is a professor of psychology and director of the Addictive Behaviors Research Center at the University of Washington. His career in research and clinical work has focused on addictive behaviors, including expectancies for alcohol and other drug effects, social facilitation of alcohol use, and the role of stress and coping in alcohol and other drug problems. His most recent work has investigated the harm reduction approach to alcohol problems in young adults. In this interview with Prevention File, he comments on recent incidents involving drinking by college students, and describes research at the University of Washington attempting to change high-risk drinking patterns among incoming students.*

**Student deaths from alcohol poisoning or other drinking incidents were in the news in the past year. Is this happening more often than it used to?**

**A:** Deaths like these seem to occur with a fair amount of regularity. I don't think the number has gone up nationally, but the publicity about the problem has gone up.

**There also seem to be more confrontations between police and crowds of drinking students around some campuses.**

**A:** When I was teaching at the University of Wisconsin in the late '60s and early '70s the drinking age was 18 and there was a sort of beer rathskeller in the Student Union. Some students would get under the influence but there were bouncers around, and if an epi-

sode occurred, it was sort of nipped in the bud. Now, with the drinking age of 21, different campuses are reacting in different ways. Some are pretty confrontational in cracking down. I think this gives students who are under 21 something to rebel against. At that age you're looking for something to rebel against anyway.

**What's the answer?**

**A:** There's a need to negotiate gradual changes in alcohol policy. I don't think you can march in and say starting tomor-

There's a need to negotiate gradual changes in alcohol policy. I don't think you can march in and say starting tomorrow you're not going to be allowed to do this or that.

row you're not going to be allowed to do this or that. One night here at the University of Washington there was a sort of fight between football players on campus and people on Greek row. Some bottles were thrown and a woman was hit in the eye and had a serious

There's a major jump in binge drinking rates when they get to college, whether they were moderate social drinkers or high-risk drinkers in high school.

injury. So a task force was set up to investigate the relationship between the Greek system and the university. They worked out a requirement that alcohol education programs be held on a quarterly basis in fraternity and sorority houses. Organization funds can no longer be spent for keggers. Changes like that.

**Aren't the national Greek organizations moving in that direction?**

**A:** Yes, I think they're making progress in changing the norms, and when you change the norms you change drinking rates. You have to start working with incoming freshmen or pledges so that over four years the norms are changed throughout the student body. This is the subject of much of the research we're doing for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

**Are drinking rates highest among the freshmen?**

**A:** A couple of years ago we published a study of the transition in drinking rates from the senior year in high school to the first year in college. There's a major jump in binge drinking rates when they get to college, whether they were moderate social drinkers or high-risk drinkers in high school. This was especially the case with students who are not living at home. We also found that the heaviest drinkers in high school tended to migrate selectively to the Greek system.

**What accounts for that?**

**A:** We did a study within our own Greek system—20 fraternities and 19 sororities. We asked them to rank each other as to reputation for a number of variables—academic performance, social altruism, drinking, dating popularity, and so forth. Everyone seemed to agree on which houses had what kind of reputation, including the heaviest drinkers. Heavy drinking high school students tend to come to these particular settings because they know about the reputation. It gets transmitted to them in the summer parties and pledge rushes. This can create a funny situation. Maybe 90 guys who are the heaviest drinkers from all over the state wind up in the same house. Even though they're drinking more than 95 percent of the other students, they think their drinking is the norm.

**The "Lifestyles" project at the University of Washington tries to reduce this kind of heavy drinking. What results can you report?**

**A:** In the fall of 1990, we began tracking 500 students, 350 of whom were heavy drinkers we identified in an assessment prior to their admission to the university. Half of them were randomly assigned to get a brief intervention in their freshman year, with feedback and follow-up, while the others were exposed to the same kind of prevention measures that all students normally get. The remaining 150 were selected from our screening sample to serve as a normative comparison group.

## The Partying Life

Hedonism and smoking during the college years appear to be linked, according to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* (Vol. 88, No. 1, January 1998). "High-risk behaviors, such as using marijuana, drinking heavily, and having multiple sex partners, are the strongest correlates of smoking status among this population," say researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health. Students who said parties were "important" to them had nearly double the risk of being current smokers. Regular indulgence in party-based "binge drinking" (five drinks per occasion for males, four drinks for females) was found to "raise the likelihood of smoking in college more than threefold," compared with those who drank moderately or abstained. The researchers say that the college years are "a time during which unhealthy behaviors developed during adolescence may be malleable or may be consolidated into lifetime patterns." Therefore, increasing anti-smoking efforts on college campuses could "help reduce the long-term morbidity and mortality related to smoking."

Their assessment had given us information about their drinking frequency, *hazardous drinking*, drinking related problems, family history of alcohol problems, and perceptions of drinking norms. So we had a lot of information.

The intervention group 18- or 19-year-olds, half male and half female, had two 45-minute sessions with one of our staff counselors. These were sort of motivational interviewing sessions. We gave them feedback about their risk levels, asking them whether they had any awareness of their risk and whether they were doing anything about it. A few of them were true pre-contemplators—drinking at very high-risk levels but not seeing themselves as being at risk. Rather than confronting them with this, we just gave them feedback and tried to suggest things they could do if they wanted to cut down or quit. We tried to maximize building on their self-efficacy.

We gave them annual feedback during the follow-up years when they were still in college, or even after they'd left. We gave them personalized computer graphics showing the changes in their drinking rates and problems compared with those of their colleagues. What we'll be reporting in our *Journal of Clinical Psychology and Consulting* article is that we saw significant reductions in binge drinking and in alcohol-related problems in the people who got the brief interventions. Of course, the drinking rates of students decline normally over the four years of college—what they call "maturing out" as they turn 21 and have more responsibilities and committed relationships.

What we want our programs to do is acceler-

ate the developmental processes of maturing out. This seems to have lasting results. When people in their late teens begin experimenting with alcohol they set up certain patterns. The more we can do in that age group to change those patterns, so much the better in the perspective of long-term prevention.

### Did any of the intervention students quit drinking altogether?

**A.** Yes, a number of them decided to quit. One young man said he saw that his drinking had been going up for three years in a row. He said his father was an alcoholic, and he didn't want the same thing to happen to him, so he quit. Of course, the majority don't quit, and what we were after was not quitting but reducing the harmful consequences of heavy drinking.

I should mention that we had some optional programs for those who didn't respond to our intervention. Those who were having serious

problems with their drinking were sent to individual counseling, and in some cases they were referred to alcoholism treatment facilities in the community.

### In a broad sense, do we seem to be making any progress in reducing campus alcohol problems?

**A.** Things seem to be improving because we know that per capita alcohol consumption has gone down in the drinking population as a whole. We found here at the University of Washington that the percentage of abstainers in the incoming classes is higher than ever before. As many as 30 to 40 percent are reporting no alcohol use at all. So even though those who drink are probably drinking at the same rate, the number of abstainers seems to be going up. □

# USING HUMOR

## in Prevention

By Rodney Skager

IN A FILM SCENE THE TALENTED but feckless main character sits stony faced at a party, oblivious to the smoking joints in each of his hands. Remembering it, I once suggested to someone, who asked my opinion about a proposed media campaign, that typical gloom and doom media prevention messages ought to be replaced by images that provoke laughter.

The idea was to let the foolish and self-diminishing experiences so often associated with alcohol and drug use amuse the audience in a way that would contribute to the message. Not surprisingly, a sharp intake of breath was the only response to my suggestion. Apparently we were discussing a subject about which nothing could possibly be funny.

I still believe that humor is the better prevention tactic for substance abuse. Humor disarms resistance by showing the absurdity in something. In contrast, gloom and doom are immediately discounted after the first contradictory experience.

After years of grim warnings from adults about the dangers of alcohol, most teenagers discover that drinking can be fun. By age 16, the majority of kids believe their peers use alcohol and drugs to have fun and because they are curious about what it is like.

By the time these kids get to college, their curiosity may have been satisfied, but they still want to have fun. Pamela Viele, director of Student Health Educational at UCLA, suggests that there is another reason for drinking among college students.

"Alcohol use is a way of legitimizing, in their own eyes, their emerging adult status. If they merely wanted to be rebellious, they would pick something that we really disapproved of," she said.

Viele supports this point with statistics showing that marijuana use is much less common among university than among high school students, and far below levels of college drinking.

Drinking has always been endemic to the undergraduate culture of secular colleges and universities, especially at the elite institutions. College officials know that to demand abstinence from undergraduates would be both futile and disastrous in its effect on applications for admission.

### See No Evil

Since colleges cannot officially sanction illegal behavior by minors, the usual response is to look the other way. For example, allowing students to drink privately in their rooms is common practice in university residence halls. But doors must be closed. As one observer of the college scene suggested, "They can drink themselves into oblivion as long as they don't make any noise."

College officials are thus forced to adopt a policy of harm reduction rather than zero tolerance. Prevention involves reducing patterns of drinking that are associated with dangerous or disruptive behavior rather than drinking in general.

Viele emphasizes that the typical undergraduate community, especially in a large public university like UCLA, is comprised of several





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Humor disarms resistance by showing the absurdity in something. In contrast, gloom and doom are immediately discounted after the first contradictory experience.

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subcultures, not all of which are significantly involved with alcohol. Members of the Greek system, are of course, most visible among those that are.

Tragedies involving consumption of lethal quantities of alcohol at fraternity initiations received national attention last Fall. Several deaths and near deaths were the result of binge drinking, usually defined as having five or more drinks on the same occasion.

A 1995 national study of colleges and universities (H. Wechsler, *Binge Drinking on American Campuses: A New Look at an Old Problem*, Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention) revealed that 80 percent of fraternity men living in-house compared to 45 percent of non-fraternity men had binged in the previous two weeks. For sorority women the numbers

were an identical 80 percent for in-house compared to only 35 percent for their non-sorority peers.

Viele decided to focus on bingeing among sorority women in part because, while fraternity members are at highest risk for visible consequences, sorority women who get drunk are at high risk for unplanned, unprotected, or coerced sex, usually with fraternity men who are also drunk.

Yet, most sorority women also strongly believe that it is wrong to get too close when under the influence, wrong to allow oneself to be coerced into unwanted sex. Nevertheless, she reports that 50 percent of sorority women nationally reported such an experience in the previous year.

The question of approach was critical. Viele observed that culture of sororities does not apply to other college women. Sorority

women are mainly white and affluent. But white students are a minority among UCLA undergraduates. The standard multicultural images might not connect. "This is not a politically correct campaign," Viele admitted.

She then set about designing an intervention with three components: intervention groups, cash incentives, and a campus-wide media campaign.

The intent of the media campaign was to develop compelling and innovative ads that would appeal to a generation of "somewhat jaded, media-bombarded young adults."

To accomplish this, professional assistance was obtained from an advertising agency known for developing media campaigns with a

"cutting-edge quality." Student focus groups were enlisted to evaluate the resulting material, which clearly communicated a normative message in a humorous, provocative way, but was not preachy.

This process resulted in ten ads designed to communicate the idea that binge drinking was disapproved of by the majority of students, a fact that Viele and her team had established in campus surveys. The ads featured student models and each contained the tag line, *Done 4*, conveying in an ironic way the *No More Than Four!* campaign message. Each ad appeared twice.

To maximize readership, the ads were positioned directly above the newspaper's crossword

puzzle, the most popular feature of the publication. A small block of copy printed on each photo communicated the academic and social benefits of stopping at four drinks, while another string of copy framed the crossword puzzle and communicated the normative reality that the majority of UCLA students drink no more than four when they party.

## Target Testing

The ads were tested with student focus groups along with a set of ads used in a similar, social norm based campaign at another university. Student focus group members complained that the latter were staid, just "a bunch of clean-cut looking people who were sitting around

(drinking), but clearly not drunk." In contrast, they concluded that the designer for the UCLA ads knew what students were really doing around alcohol.

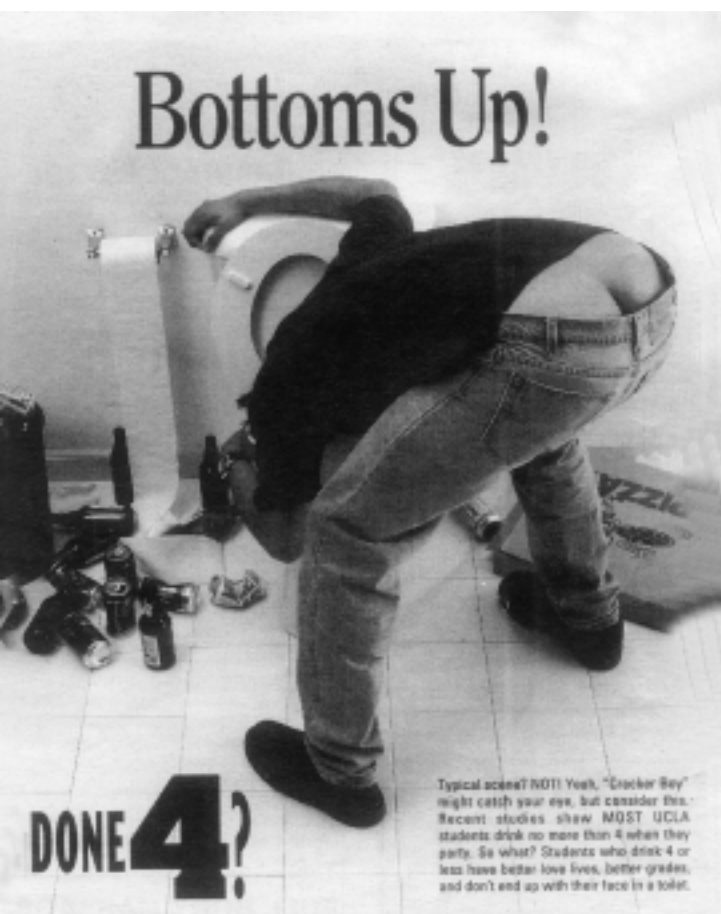
Viele asked the focus groups whether the ad might be offensive. The students responded that they thought it was hilarious, making positive comments including, "It speaks to us, we like this stuff." "We are sick of all that other stuff."

"We've all had our heads down the toilet." Viele concluded, "The laughter opens them up to considering the rest of the message."

The ads were the campus wide component of the sorority-focused intervention. The latter also included a core outreach group drawn from fraternities and sororities whose objective was to bring the normative message directly to the sorority houses. The performers were equal numbers of men and women from a variety of Greek houses. They presented fast-paced, humorous, three-minute skits (over a 12-week period) during regularly scheduled Monday night sorority house dinners. Student performers were not known for heavy drinking, but neither were they "nerds" or unpopular.

"It was important that they had credible reference power among their peers," Viele observed.

The results of the intervention are being followed up in a formal research design. From the perspective of this reporter, it is gratifying that the power of humor as a prevention tactic is finally being tested. Equally, the UCLA project has taken another unusual step by consulting with the target audience on material and approach. How refreshing that is! It will be interesting to see if those who design prevention programs at the secondary school level will ever manage to grasp the same idea. □



# College Athletics and the Brewers: Big Business

**A**THLETIC PROGRAMS AT MANY colleges and universities have long relied on the alcohol industry, especially the brewers, for financial support. For example, in 1990, the University of Iowa entered a licensing agreement with Coors Brewing Company permitting use of its Cornhusker mascot on special edition cans of Coors beer.

In 1994 the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities negotiated a contract worth \$150,000 with the Miller Brewing Company that allowed the brewer to put up signs in the university's athletics arenas and use the university's mascot, the Golden Gopher, in Miller beer ads.

But according to a report in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Jan. 9, 1998), some campus administrators are rethinking the relationship between college athletics programs and the alcoholic-beverage industry.

For example, last fall, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill joined Baylor and Brigham Young Universities in the small number of colleges and universities that refuse alcohol advertising in their arenas and on radio broadcasts of games.

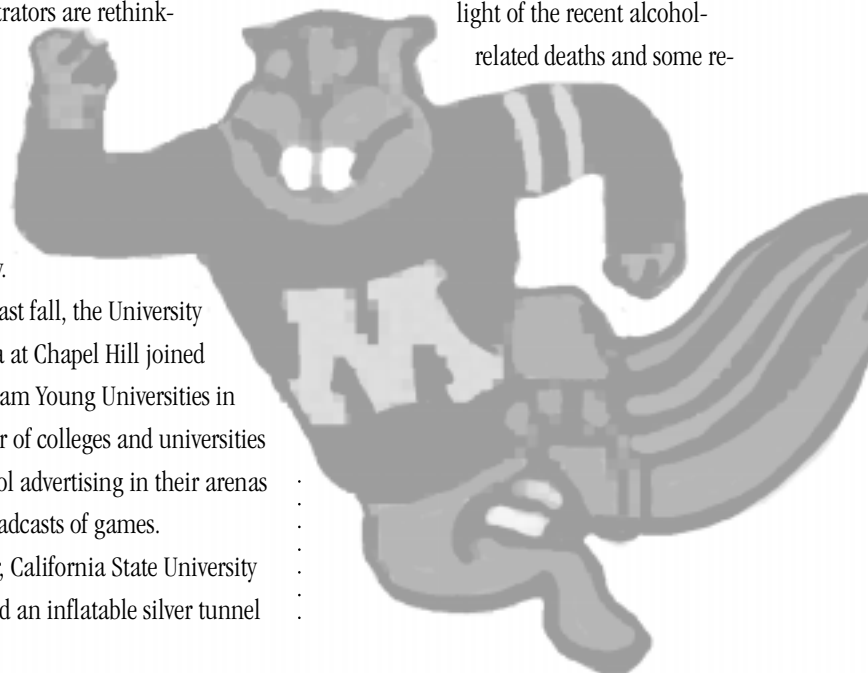
Last November, California State University at Fresno removed an inflatable silver tunnel

that resembled a can of Coors Silver Bullet beer from its sports arena. Last year the Big Ten and Pacific-10 Conferences tried unsuccessfully to persuade the city of Pasadena not to sell beer at the Rose Bowl.

And, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala has called on college sports officials to immediately end their business relations with the alcohol industry. In a January speech to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, Shalala said the move would help curb alcohol problems on college campuses.

As a former university president, Shalala acknowledged that the alcohol industry provides much-needed funds for college sports programs. However, she said, it is time for tough advertising guidelines, "especially in

light of the recent alcohol-related deaths and some re-





search suggesting that advertising may influence adolescents to be more favorably disposed to drinking." Shalala also called on schools to eliminate alcohol consumption at the site of sporting events, such as tailgate parties.

But the going may be tough for substantial reform. According to the *Chronicle*, in 1989 former N.C.A.A. executive director, Richard D. Schultz met stiff resistance, both from within

the association and without, when he attempted to reduce the visibility of alcohol advertising in college athletics.

Schultz, who is now president of the U.S. Olympic Committee, told the *Chronicle* that the beer companies were major advertisers for some of our members, "and we got a lot of pressure from breweries other than those that sponsored the telecasts."

He succeeded in persuading the membership and the television networks to lower the proportion of beer-and-wine advertising to one minute per hour on telecasts of N.C.A.A. championships; restricting the space devoted to beer and wine in the programs and scorecards for N.C.A.A. championships to 14 percent; and prohibiting beer companies from sponsoring championships.

"That was as far as we could go because of the networks. They had concerns about their contracts with advertisers, and their sales, and certain First Amendment rights that they believed everybody had," Schultz said.

Even so, the N.C.A.A. restrictions have had little impact on the amount of alcohol advertising on college sports broadcasts, because the rights to regular-season games are controlled by the individual conferences, most of which have no restrictions on such advertising.

Joel Nielsen, associate athletics director at Wake Forest University, told the *Chronicle* that because the beer industry is perhaps the biggest commercial supporter of college athletics, the development of restrictions is unlikely. But beer ads to support athletics may soon be a thing of the past at Minnesota.

Miller's contract ran out last June. McKinley Boston, who was director of men's athletics at Minnesota in 1994 and negotiated the Miller contract, is now vice-president for student development and intercollegiate athletics of the university system. He's putting the brakes on a similar, three-year \$225,000 contract that the university was negotiating with the Minnesota Brewing Company. Instead of the three years requested by the university's athletics department, he recommended that the contract be limited to one year, and that only because negotiations with the brewer were almost complete.

"I just personally felt like it was the right thing to do. I just felt like we were sending students a mixed message," said Boston. □

# Campus Police

FOR ITS NEXT PARTY, SIGMA NU fraternity at West Texas A&M University may invite some unlikely guests—campus police.

Not only will the police be there, Sigma Nu president L.V. Currey expects they'll be part of the fun. The plan is to allow police to do breathalyzer tests on guests before they leave the party.

While the purpose is serious, Currey said party-goers will probably find the process entertaining. Even if they don't, Currey said, "The campus police are welcome at our house."

Fraternities and other student organizations haven't always had such a welcoming attitude toward campus police, but things are changing. Probably nowhere is that more evident than at West Texas A&M, where campus police chief Eddie Wilson is redefining his department's role in the campus system.

"For many years, we felt our only job was law enforcement," Wilson said. "But all we were doing was cleaning up after the fact. For me, that wasn't enough.

"It didn't seem like our only job should be to put people in jail. Why weren't we involved in resolving the problems before they happened?"

Because many of the crimes his force deals with are linked to alcohol and other drug use, Wilson felt prevention should be part of his department's mission.

He was the one who reached out a friendly hand to Sigma Nu, as well as to other student organizations on campus. More than that, he has reached out to academic leaders, leaders

in the surrounding community, and alcohol and other drug prevention professionals. He believes that if they work together in coalition they may prevent many campus crimes and provide a safer atmosphere for students.

He knows he is testing new waters. When the Higher Education Commission held a national meeting on alcohol and other drug prevention, Wilson attended. He was the only campus police official there.

"It's like there's a river," he said, "and, I'm trying to cross that river."

For years his department has dealt with a typical tide of campus problems, most of them the result of alcohol. Wilson said every time there is a party that involves students and drinking there are some probable results. These include:

- **Sexual assault.** Party guests who have too much to drink either assault someone at the party or afterwards. Or, guests who have too much to drink become victims of sexual assault.
- **Traffic crashes.** Guests leave the party after having too much to drink, and drive away, putting themselves and others at risk.
- **Break-ins and burglaries.** Young people who might not commit such crimes under normal circumstances act them out when their judgment is impaired by too much drinking.
- **Domestic violence.** Alcohol fuels violent disputes and physical abuse. Even when there is no physical violence, drunken fights can harm or destroy relationships.



Eddie Wilson

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"It didn't seem like our only job should be to put people in jail. Why weren't we involved in resolving the problems before they happened?"

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The plan is to allow  
police to do  
breathalyzer tests on  
guests before they  
leave the party.

"When the alcohol is flowing at a party, there is a window of time when it's exciting and fun," Wilson said. "But what happens after that? How many people can say the next day that that party was beneficial to their lives?"

"Too often, one night of partying can disrupt a life."

Wilson said that policing such problems is important, but it's not the only answer.

"This is not just an enforcement issue; it's a social change issue," he said.

Wilson hopes that the coalition he is forming will become a model for other campuses across the nation.

"I want this to be such a strong program that the president of our university can assure parents of two things," Wilson said. "That our commitment is to provide a strong academic program, but that we also want to help our students grow into productive members of society. If parents send their children to us alcohol and drug free, we want to send them out into the world, after college, the same way."

Wilson has two young children himself. "When I send them to college, I want to feel assured they will come out safe."

As part of his coalition building, Wilson said he is striving to build trust with students, such as Currey and his fraternity brothers at Sigma Nu. Wilson wants students to feel they can turn to campus police when dealing with the issues of alcohol and other drug use.

"We all need, from time to time, someone to be strong beside us," Wilson said. "I think that could be a good place for law enforcement."

Sigma Nu, a national fraternity, already has imposed restrictions on drinking in its houses and plans to go alcohol-free by the year 2000.

"We at Sigma Nu are doing something about these problems, but the problems haven't gone away entirely," Currey said. He mentioned the alcohol-related death of a student at MIT, the first week of fall semester.

"He wasn't a member of Sigma Nu, but he was a Greek, so I feel it," Currey said. "These things are still happening because there's a lack of education and a lack of maturity."

Currey said he likes the idea of having a partnership with campus police. "I'm tired of the reputation frats have. It causes people to overlook the good things we do, the money we raise for Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and our canned food drives."

While Wilson may be a leader in changing the role of campus police, he is not the only college peace officer who thinks along these lines. Randy Fedak, assistant chief of police at University of California, Santa Cruz, is a member of the Alcohol and Drug Advisory Group on his campus, an organization of students, administrators, and community leaders.

There are no fraternities or sororities on the UCSC campus, but partying is still a favorite activity among students. Fedak said marijuana has been the drug of choice at UCSC for many years, but alcohol is becoming increasingly popular. The number of alcohol overdoses is on the rise.

He and his department are working to educate students about the risks and consequences of alcohol and other drug use. During a recent Alcohol Awareness Week at the school, they emphasized that underage drinking—whether or not students drove or caused problems afterwards—has stiff consequences.

For instance, anyone under the age of 21 arrested for public drunkenness faces the suspension of his or her driver's license for six months. Also, simply driving someone to a liquor store to purchase alcohol for underage drinkers carries the penalty of a one-year license suspension.

"When you talk about taking away their driver's licenses, they listen," Fedak said.

UCSC students also tend to pay attention when it comes to housing, Fedak said, since there is an extreme housing crunch at the school. School officials have set up a policy that an underage student caught in possession of a beer keg faces loss of housing.

While consequences can be helpful, resolving the substance abuse problem

requires more effort—from the campus and the community, Fedak said.

Like many schools, UCSC now offers some alcohol and drug-free residences, and Fedak hopes to see more. "We need to assure the students it is socially acceptable to be alcohol and drug free," he said.

Fedak has also tried to forge an alliance with local businesses that serve alcohol.

"Sometimes they need to be educated about what's acceptable and what's not," he said. When businesses distribute flyers on campus promoting events that encourage alcohol abuse, "I go out and follow-up with those owners."

Before going to work for UCSC, Fedak was part of the campus police force at the Univer-

sity of California, San Diego, where he helped eliminate some controversial keg parties.

The parties, called TGIFs, were held on campus every Friday evening. Student association money was used to buy kegs, which were set up outdoors. Beer was dispensed free to students. Though the beer was supposed to go only to students 21 or older, Fedak said the set-up made enforcement "a nightmare."

Besides, he realized that enforcement was not the key in that situation—prevention was, and he finally helped persuade the school to shut down the parties.

Sgt. Bob Jones of UCSD remembers the TGIFs, and he's glad they're gone. In general, UCSD is now a pretty quiet campus, he said. There are no fraternities on campus, and the school has



PHOTO BY B. RYAN



A/P WORLD PHOTO

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Too often, one night  
of partying can  
disrupt a life.

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neither a football nor a basketball team, so there are few parties revolving around sporting events.

However, Jones said UCSD faces a unique problem when it comes to alcohol use. It is located just 20 minutes from the Mexican border, and underage students often travel south to drink at Tijuana nightclubs. Since local high school students do the same, it has become a matter of concern not just to UCSD, but to the San Diego community in general.

Jones said a representative from his department attends each freshmen orientation session at UCSD to warn parents about this problem.

"It can be a dangerous trip (to Tijuana)," he said. "We are making an ongoing effort to prevent it."

At the University of California, Santa Barbara, campus police are also involved in ongoing prevention efforts. Students there, joined by young people from surrounding

communities, used to stage huge bashes for Halloween.

In 1989, 600 people were arrested during one of those bashes, which drew an estimated 30,000 young people. In 1990, 200 arrests were made.

*The Party Is Over* said the flyers that were handed out this year by UCSB campus police, administrators and law enforcement officials from surrounding communities. *Be a Guest for Halloween—In the Santa Barbara County Jail.*

A coalition of campus and community leaders also forbade the playing of amplified live or prerecorded music at UCSB or in nearby Isla Vista—an effort called Ban the Bands—during the entire Halloween weekend.

"We are serious," the flyers read. "There is no party."

And, in the end, there was no party. □



## **Age Counts**

Those who start drinking at younger ages are at greater risk for developing alcohol problems in later life, according to a recent study published in the *Journal of Substance Abuse* (Vol. 10, No. 1, January 1998). In fact, people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin

drinking at age 21. And the risk for drinking patterns that repeatedly causes life problems is more than doubled for early drinkers.

Researchers at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism found that more than 40 percent of respondents who began drinking before age 15 were classified with alcohol dependence at some time in their lives. That compares to

24.5 percent for respondents who began drinking at age 17 and approximately 10 percent for respondents who began drinking at the ages of 21 and 22.

The analysis revealed an increase in risk for subsequent alcohol dependence among persons who began drinking at ages 23 and 24 that declined again for persons 25 or older. Overall, the risk for alcohol dependence decreased by 14 percent with each increasing year of age of drinking onset.

The prevalence of problematic drinking patterns also declined as the drinking age rose. Of those who began drinking at age 14, 13.8 percent subsequently were classified as problem drinkers, compared with 2.5 percent of those who began drinking at age 25 or older. Overall, the risk for lifetime problem drinking decreased by 8 percent with each increasing year of age of drinking onset.

Additional information on the study is available from NIAAA on the web at <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>.

## **Top 20 Imbibing Countries**

According to the annual *World Drink Trends* survey, Australia is the only non-European nation to make it into the top 20 countries in terms of per capita alcohol consumption. Australians consume an average 7.5 liters of pure alcohol a year, just 0.1 liters behind Britain, which is 19th on the alcohol consumption ladder. Luxembourg tops the table with 11.8 liters of pure alcohol consumed per person. Portugal follows Luxembourg on the consumption table, with France in third place.

## **Follow the Leader Into Trouble**

Don't look to fraternity leaders to help moderate the hazardous drinking that seems endemic to Greek life on campus. According to a recent study, leaders of fraternities, and to a lesser extent leaders of sororities, tend to be among the heaviest drinkers and the most out-of-control party-goers.

A national survey of 25,411 students from 61 institutions conducted by

*Continued back inside cover.*

## **The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention**



Funded by the U.S. Department of Education since 1993, the Higher Education Center provides support to all institutions of higher education in their efforts to address alcohol and other drug problems. The Center also receives financial support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The U.S. Department of Education established the Center to provide nationwide support for campus alcohol and other drug prevention efforts. The Center is working with colleges, universities, and proprietary schools throughout the country to develop strategies for changing campus culture, to foster environments that promote healthy lifestyles, and to prevent illegal alcohol and other drug use among students.

The Higher Education Center provides technical assistance, develops publications, and conducts training workshops. It also provides support for the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. You can find out more by contacting the Higher Education Center directly at:

**The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention**

Education Development Center, Inc.

55 Chapel Street

Newton, Massachusetts 02158-1060

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Continued from inside front cover.

researchers with the Core Institute at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale found that Greek leaders are helping to set norms of hazardous drinking and uncontrolled behavior.

"These are the very individuals we would hope would be most concerned about liability and legal issues, as well as other serious consequences related to drinking. But surprisingly, we

found that the more involved a person is with Greek life, the higher the drinking level and the greater the adverse consequences," said Philip W. Meilman, PhD, director of counseling and psychological services at Cornell University and one of the three researchers involved in the study.

The report "Alcohol Use in the Greek System: Follow the Leader?" published in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* (Vol. 59, No. 1, January 1998), was co-authored by Jeffrey R. Cashin, Cheryl A. Presley, PhD, and Meilman.

"From the data we cannot say if it is the case that heavy drinkers are attracted to Greek life or if Greek life promotes heavy drinking practices or if it is some combination of both. However, common sense and observation would suggest that a combination of both factors is involved," said Cashin, now with Anderson Consulting Services.

## Smoking Up, Beer Drinking Down

The percentage of college freshmen smokers is at its highest level in 30 years, with 16 percent saying they smoke frequently. That compares with 9 percent a decade ago, according to an annual survey conducted by the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute.

Support for legalizing marijuana again rose, with 35 percent agreeing that pot should be legalized. That compares with a low of 17 percent in 1989. But beer drinking is down, with 53 percent acknowledging frequent or occasional beer drinking, compared with a high of 75 percent in 1981.

The annual survey gathered responses from 252,082 freshmen at 464 institutions. It is the oldest and most extensive assessment of student attitudes in the country.

## Preventing Heroin Overdose Deaths

A thousand deaths from heroin overdose each year could be prevented in Britain if emergency resuscitation drugs were supplied to addicts and their close contacts, according to a report published in the *British Medical Journal* (Vol. 316, No. 7128, Jan. 31, 1998).

John Strang, director of the National

Addiction Centre at Maudsley Hospital in London, suggested that premature deaths from drug overdoses account for the increased mortality among opiate addicts. His team plans to involve addicts, and a nominated partner, in therapeutic training programs, which will teach basic resuscitation techniques and the correct way of administering naloxone, a specific heroin antidote, to reverse the effects of a heroin overdose.

In the past, drug user communities relied on unproved and potentially dangerous methods of resuscitation, such as injecting salt, placing the person in a cold bath, and injecting adrenaline through the breast bone as demonstrated by John Travolta in the film *Pulp Fiction*.

Prevention File



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